



# Seasoning

## GET THE MOST FLAVOR FROM FRESH HERBS

There are three ways to release the most flavor from fresh herbs. Chopping is one, bruising is another and heating is a third way.

## TIMING MATTERS

Add hearty herbs such as thyme, rosemary, oregano, sage and marjoram to dishes early in the cooking process. This gives them time to release maximum flavor. Save delicate herbs like parsley, cilantro, tarragon, chives and basil for the end. They will lose their fresh flavor and bright color if added too soon.

Add pepper to meat after you sear for a stronger pepper flavor. Heat affects volatile compounds in pepper, which can reduce the flavor.

## SEASON WITH AN ACID

Try a little lemon juice or vinegar in soups, stews and sauces instead of grabbing the salt. Acid works like salt to reduce the effects of bitter flavor compounds so they are less noticeable. Try just a dash, about  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon.

## KNOW YOUR SALT

Salt plays a very important role in cooking—too little and the food won't taste good, too much and it may contribute to high blood pressure. The key is learning how much is enough. This can be difficult because some people are accustomed to more salt than others.

When you are trying to reduce the salt in a food, start out by reducing some but not all. As you get used to eating less salt, you can reduce more. The exception is for baked goods and food preservation. For baked goods, salt is needed for flavor, to control the fermentation rate of yeast fermentation, color and dough structure. For pickling and drying, salt is important to prevent the growth of harmful microorganisms.



Different kinds and brands of salt vary in crystal and particle size and shape. Large crystals require more salt. For example, a teaspoon of table salt is about the same as  $1\frac{1}{4}$  to 2 teaspoons of a kosher salt depending on the grain size, which can vary by brand. A teaspoon of table salt is about the same as 1 to 2 teaspoons of sea salt depending on the size of the grain. The larger the grain the more salt it will take compared to table salt.

# THERE ARE NO RULES

There are no hard and fast rules about how to blend herbs and spices or how much to use when you cook. Use the chart below to experiment and enjoy the discovery of new flavors.

## HERE ARE SOME RECOMMENDED BLENDS TO GET YOU STARTED

- Mix equal parts of basil, dill weed, garlic and parsley and use this mixture in egg dishes such as omelets.
- Combine one part oregano, two parts marjoram and three parts sage to make an excellent seasoning for poultry dishes.
- Add Italian flair by mixing equal parts basil, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, sage, savory and thyme.
- Combine cumin, garlic, hot pepper and oregano for a great barbecue.
- Mix basil, parsley and savory to add zest to vegetable dishes.

## EXPLORE

Use this chart to explore what herbs and spices bring out the best in the food you prepare.

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Soups      | bay, basil, chervil, marjoram, parsley, savory, rosemary, tarragon                               |
| Poultry    | garlic, oregano, rosemary, savory, sage  |
| Beef       | bay, chives, cloves, cumin, garlic, hot pepper, marjoram, rosemary, savory                       |
| Pork       | cinnamon, coriander, cumin, garlic, ginger, hot pepper, pepper, sage, savory, thyme              |
| Lamb       | basil, garlic, mint, onion, rosemary   |
| Fish       | basil, chervil, dill, fennel, tarragon, garlic, parsley, thyme                                   |
| Eggs       | cayenne, chives, nutmeg, onion, parsley  |
| Cheese     | cayenne, dill, garlic, oregano, parsley  |
| Vegetables | basil, burnet, chervil, chives, cinnamon, dill, tarragon, marjoram, mint, parsley, pepper, thyme |
| Salads     | basil, borage, burnet, chives, tarragon, garlic, parsley, sorrel, and herb vinegar               |



*Janie Burney PhD, RD, Professor/Nutrition Specialist*